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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Reports from Manila—Plague and smallpox.

Assistant Surgeon Heiser, chief quarantine officer for the Philippine Islands, reports, May 26, as follows: During the week ended May 16, 1903, there occurred in Manila 8 cases of plague, with 8 deaths, and 6 cases of smallpox, none resulting fatally.

Since the beginning of the year the officers of the service stationed in the islands have not come in contact officially with plague cases or plague on infected vessels, with the exception of 1 case on the S. S. *Bolinao*. The history of this case shows that this vessel left the port of Manila March 27, 1903, and returned April 14, 1903, with a case of plague among the crew, thus showing that the disease in all probability was contracted in Manila. The vessel was remanded to Mariveles and thoroughly disinfected. No further cases developed.

As far as we have been able to ascertain, no new cases have been introduced from the outside. All the cases reported have been of persons resident in Manila for fifteen days or longer.

Only 3 Americans have contracted the disease this year, and they were persons of questionable habits.

The disease has been increasing since January, but the 52 cases in April will probably be the maximum number for one month. Judging by the history of previous years, a steady decline may be expected.

Serum inoculation—Precautions against importation of plague from China.

Several weeks ago a new policy of dealing with plague contacts was inaugurated. Contacts are now taken to the detention station, injected with Shega antiplague virus, their clothing disinfected, and they are then released. Expert rat catchers are sent to the house from which the case was taken with instructions to destroy all the rats in the immediate vicinity. The house is then disinfected with bichloride, or sometimes even burned.

An arrangement has been made whereby the Chinese residents (60,000) shall be injected with Shega virus.

Letters have been written to our officers on duty in China suggesting that unless they could certify that passengers embarking for the Philippines would not convey plague such passengers be detained until the incubation period of the disease be passed. The medical officer on duty at Amoy has made arrangements to detain steerage passengers before embarkation. Upon the arrival here of Chinese passengers the board of health injects them with the Shega virus.

All vessels plying between Chinese and Philippine ports, and Philippine and United States ports, either have been or will be fumigated with sulphur for the purpose of destroying rats and other vermin.

All vessels arriving from Chinese ports are carefully inspected, articles of cargo which are likely to convey infection are prohibited, as also are animals. The steerage passengers from Hongkong are disinfected and inspected in Hongkong previous to sailing. In Amoy the passengers are inspected before embarking, the vessel being required to call at Mariveles for disinfection and inspection before arriving at Manila.